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**COLOMBIAN DRUG LORD SENTENCED TO 40 YEARS'
IN FEDERAL PRISON**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that ALBERTO ORLANDEZ GAMBOA, alias "Caracol," who once boasted of being among Colombia's top ten drug lords, was sentenced to 40 years' in prison by United States District Judge THOMAS P. GRIESA in Manhattan federal court yesterday.

According to Indictment and evidence offered in the course of GAMBOA's sentencing, GAMBOA, age 49, used a penchant for violence and the enormous proceeds of his criminal conduct to consolidate his control over drug trafficking routes along Colombia's Caribbean coast. Between 1990 and 1999, and including two separate periods spent in pre-trial detention in Colombia on charges of murder and kidnaping, GAMBOA led an organization of approximately a dozen large-scale traffickers in Barranquilla, Colombia, who collectively smuggled tons of cocaine into the United States through a variety of drug routes.

GAMBOA, who in 2000 was among the first Colombian's to be extradited to the United States after an amendment to the

Colombian constitution that provided for the resumption of extraditions, had pled guilty to charges of narcotics trafficking and money laundering on March 10, 2003, after jury selection had begun in his trial.

Documents filed in connection with GAMBOA's sentencing showed that for nearly a decade - and at a time when America's inner-cities were experiencing the very worst of their cocaine and crack epidemics - GAMBOA and his associates bombarded the United States with enormous loads of cocaine, using varied drug smuggling routes that included airplanes, speedboats, and ocean-going cargo ships. According to material filed with the District Court, GAMBOA and his associates generally transported their cocaine from Colombia and Venezuela's northern coasts to various Caribbean destinations, and then on to Puerto Rico and the United States. According to the same documents and exhibits, GAMBOA and his organization also imported large quantities of cocaine directly to the United States from ports in South America by concealing that cocaine in the walls and doors of shipping containers.

The evidence showed that GAMBOA and his associates made hundreds of millions of dollars in illegal gains from their cocaine trafficking operations, and employed a variety of techniques to "launder" the proceeds of their drug dealing. These techniques included converting the cash proceeds of their drug sales into money orders, which were then shipped by

overnight delivery to locations in the United States and Colombia, purchasing properties, businesses, and assets around the world, and using black market currency exchanges. On other occasions, GAMBOA simply shipped bulk quantities of United States currency to South America. According to papers and exhibits filed in the District Court, for example, in May 1998, the United States Customs Service seized over \$11 million in cash belonging to GAMBOA in hollowed-out truck transmissions packed in a shipping container and destined for Venezuela from Port Elizabeth, New Jersey.

GAMBOA's drug trafficking brought him both enormous wealth and significant notoriety in Colombia, where he was twice imprisoned of charges of murder and kidnaping. In the days prior to his August 18, 2000, extradition from Colombia to the United States, GAMBOA issued a statement, titled "Declaration to My Colombian People," which was signed with his name and a thumbprint and published by Cambio Magazine, a Colombian weekly news magazine. In that statement, GAMBOA boasted:

Yes, it is true that I was a drug trafficker and yes, among drug traffickers there are lords, as I know there are. I consider myself among the first ten.

In sentencing GAMBOA to 40 years' imprisonment, Judge GRIESA characterized GAMBOA's offenses as among the most serious he had ever seen, and noted the damage that GAMBOA's drug dealing

had done to countless lives.

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Customs Service, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, and the Colombian National Police.

Mr. KELLEY stated: "In 2000 GAMBOA was the third Colombian national and the first Kingpin extradited to the United States from Colombia to be brought to justice for his crimes. Yesterday's sentence sends the strongest possible message to those who traffic in illegal drugs: Our fight against those who seek to profit from the sale of narcotics will not stop at our borders. Those who seek to export drugs to the United States will not be allowed to hide behind borders to escape the consequences of their crimes."

GAMBOA's case was prosecuted by this Office's International Narcotics Trafficking ("INT") Unit in conjunction with the New York/New Jersey Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force. Assistant United States Attorney ROBERTO FINZI is in charge of the prosecution.

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